

ABILITIES AND PERSONAL QUALITIES THAT DETERMINE SUCCESS  
OR FAILURE FOR HIGH SCHOOL COMMERCIAL GRADUATES

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PROBLEM.....	2
PURPOSE.....	4
PROCEDURE.....	4
RESULTS	
Part I.....	5
Part II.....	20
CONCLUSIONS.....	31
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	34
APPENDIX.....	36

## INTRODUCTION

Commercial education in the high school is still in the experimental stage. It has never been conspicuously successful nor has it, until recent years, been of a quality that promised much advance over the private commercial school. It has never been looked upon with favor by educators until recently, and the old traditional idea that the high school should be a preparatory school for college has retarded its growth.

Business colleges thrived throughout the country during the last half of the nineteenth century, and it was not until about 1890 that even the shorter commercial courses were offered in any high school, but by 1900 the demand by the tax payers had become too insistent to remain unheeded. Its growth has become so rapid, there remains no doubt of its usefulness. It has grown in response to a real need and a real demand.

The high school has not been a successful competitor of the private commercial school. In purely mechanical lines the graduates of the high school are not so thoroughly prepared as those in the private schools, but in capacity to acquire knowledge and the ability to use it, they are far superior. Some high schools have planned their courses

to meet the needs not only of those who will remain until graduation, but also of those who will leave school after a year or two.

The conservatism that has blocked the progress of commercial education so long is changing to a different attitude in the secondary schools. Commercial education has become a very important part of the average American high school. In a strictly modern commercial department, the instruction given is practical but the cultural value of education is by no means lost, and it is at the present time one of the most popular courses offered.

#### PROBLEM

For many years commercial education in our high schools has experienced an evergrowing demand of the pupil for the subjects and training offered in this field of education. There are numerous opinions and ideas of educators and of the public as to just what this training should be. Schools have to a very great extent copied the aims and objectives of the private commercial schools. Whether these objectives of the private commercial schools should be the same for the public school is a question raised by many educators and teachers.

The popularity of the course continues to grow, and it is quite evident that more pupils are enrolling for business training than can get jobs upon graduation. Therefore, the question arises, are there other values to be received from commercial training than just vocational; and, if not, is the commercial training justified as it is now offered in our schools?

The nature of commercial subjects necessitates a certain amount of technical training; but just how much technical training is profitable, compared with the fundamental principles of business, is a question. The "new deal" in education seems to be emphasizing the importance of taking boys and girls through a four year course in high school and returning them to society better prepared to meet the cultural, social, and vocational aspects of living in a community in which they are likely to remain the greater part of their lives.

If we are to continue the commercial training as now offered in our high school it would appear as though we must justify the training so as more nearly to correlate with the aims and objectives of the public school education. There are a variety of jobs that graduates may hold in the business world of today; and if they are to cope successful-

ly with these many positions, we may well ask the question, what are the abilities and traits the employee should possess? Can the high school meet the requirements in commercial training?

#### PURPOSE

It is the purpose of the writer in undertaking this study to determine, if possible, what abilities and personal qualities are essential in the teaching of commercial subjects that will better prepare high school graduates to hold business positions and fit them better for a life in the community in which they are likely to reside. The investigation also includes a study of abilities and personal qualities that are now being developed in commercial departments. An effort is also made to discover what employers expect of the graduates whom they employ.

#### PROCEDURE

The materials and data for this study were collected by means of two questionnaires. A questionnaire was mailed to 105 superintendents and principals in Kansas which included 15 principals of cities of the first class, 25 principals of cities of the second class, and 65 superintendents and principals of rural high schools and third

class cities. From these questionnaires much valuable information for this problem has been recorded. One question asked them to name two business firms which had employed their graduates. There were 59 principals replied to the questionnaire naming 75 business firms. The second questionnaire was mailed to these, and 53 were returned in time for this study. From this source of information the writer is of the belief that the findings are quite reliable for the graduates who actually found employment. There has been no follow-up study of other pupils who have graduated from this course and have not been employed.

## RESULTS

### Part I

The trends in the enrollment in commercial education has been on the increase since 1918 as shown by the Biennial survey of education. The number of schools that reported commercial courses in 1930 over 1918 were 937, which is 31.73 per cent increase. The number of increase in enrollment in commercial courses in 1930 over 1918 was 333,258 which is 119.76 per cent increase. These facts are shown in Table I on trends in enrollment in commercial courses.

In replying to the principal's questionnaire there

appears to be many opinions as to why the commercial course is so popular in high schools at the present time. The reasons are as follows:

1. The courses have an attraction for the pupils because they expect them to be easy with very little if any outside preparation.

2. They have an appeal and fascination because the pupil likes to do things with his hands, and it gives something definite and tangible with which to work.

3. Parents can see the immediate and ultimate use of such training.

4. The training more nearly fits the needs of the student in the public's eye than any other group of subjects.

5. In many schools commercial work is the only vocational work offered.

6. The present financial situation forces on youth the early consideration of the economic side of life.

7. Commercial courses are popular because of the opportunity in business and the fact that this branch of learning seems to be more functional than others.

8. Pupils anticipate immediate employment upon graduation.

There are a variety of opinions as to what subjects



Table I

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES  
1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

Educational Research Service

March 9, 1932

Trends in Enrollments in Commercial Courses  
Public High and Junior High Schools, 1918 to 1930.

	1917-18	1923-24	1929-30	Percent of Increase 1930 over 1918
Total Number of Schools Reporting.....	15,951	14,827	22,237	59.89
Total Enrollment.....	1,775,619	2,950,408	5,212,179	193.64
Number of Schools Reporting Commercial Courses (not subjects).....	2,953	3,742	3,800	31.73
Number Enrolled in Commercial Courses (not subjects).....	276,275	430,975	611,533	119.76

## Source of Data:

1917-18 - U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education. Biennial Survey of Education,  
1918-19. Vol. 4, p. 203, 254.

1923-24 - U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education. Biennial Survey of Education,  
1922-24. p. 306.

1929-30 - Unpublished figures of the U. S. Office of Education, not released for publi-  
cation. These are preliminary totals; final editing may result in a few changes.

\*These are not enrollments in typewriting, shorthand, etc., when offered as separate sub-  
jects to pupils enrolled in separate commercial curricula.

should be offered in a modern commercial department. Quite naturally the larger schools offer two years of bookkeeping, two years of shorthand, two years of typewriting, and semester courses in commercial arithmetic, commercial geography, and a few principals favor courses in penmanship, business English, and salesmanship. In the smaller schools only one year of bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting is offered, with semester courses in commercial arithmetic and geography. It is quite natural that the number of different subjects offered depends upon the size of the school and the type of community.

Twenty-three of the high school principals indicate that the actual conditions of employment have not been provided for; only twelve feel that employment conditions are provided for; and sixteen gave indefinite replies. There is quite a definite feeling among many that to provide for the actual conditions of employment is not the function of the high school. It was expressed by some that there is such a variety of different types of business positions in modern industrial conditions that it is not only inadvisable to provide for these actual conditions of employment, but it is impossible. Doubt was also expressed as to whether or not students can receive sufficient training in high

school to fit them for the actual conditions of employment, nor should it be expected, the job of the school being to build foundations.

Among the things in commercial subjects that are over-emphasized is the stress that is placed on speed in type-writing, interschool competition, and contest work for speed at the expense of accuracy. In the smaller schools shorthand and stenography courses are being over-emphasized, and in some cases there are too many years of typewriting offered. Other principals felt that the bookkeeping course needed reorganizing, and in general too much preparation for the big job was stressed rather than taking into account the things that might apply to the type of community in which the school is located. In other words there is too much emphasis placed on making experts which is not the function of the high school.

Among the topics in commercial subjects which are not emphasized enough and appear below in order of precedence are accuracy, neatness, business spelling, business English, and punctuation. Fundamentals in arithmetic, penmanship, commercial geography, salesmanship and business management were mentioned. In typewriting more letter writing and actual writing of real business letters would be valuable,

and it was also suggested that some dictation work to the machines would be of value. Under office training more actual office practice and filing would be helpful to the student and the pupil might be given some experience in the practice of meeting people by coming in contact with business men of the community.

Under bookkeeping it was suggested that the transactions might arise from the actual problems in the home and community; since, as few employees can spend all their time in typewriting, taking dictation, and keeping books, other secretarial duties should be stressed to the advantage of the pupil. The entire curriculum might be made to better fit the needs of the average citizen rather than turning out bookkeepers and stenographers. While the entire curriculum needs to function better than at present, there is a possibility that the commercial subjects are more functional than many other courses offered in our high schools.

The general opinion is that 60 minutes a day is not too long for a typewriting class; however, many believe that more could be accomplished if two 30 or 40 minute periods a day could be used, with some time intervening between periods.

Some of the methods that have been found successful in

accomplishing accuracy in typewriting are

1. By giving as much actual practical training as possible and actually writing letters or other material to be mailed out, limited in its possibilities of course.

2. By posting charts and graphs showing each pupil's progress and emphasizing accuracy instead of speed.

3. By finding the pupil's trouble and overcoming individual difficulties.

4. By stressing rhythm by the use of victrola records in the early stages of the course.

5. By either allowing pupil to complete course in less than regular time or requiring more than regular work.

6. By practice work at the beginning of the course strictly supervised by instructor, or in other words using the direct method of teaching typewriting.

7. By concentrated practice based upon basic fundamentals.

8. By handing in all sheets including spoiled sheets.

9. By never permitting the use of an eraser.

10. By cutting down emphasis on speed, never mentioning speed until the keyboard is thoroughly learned.

Some of the methods that have been found to be successful in accomplishing accuracy in bookkeeping are

1. By teaching pupils carefully how to proceed and how to find errors, then making them rely upon themselves, giving very little further help.

2. By a short review of arithmetical fundamentals at the beginning of the course or requiring commercial arithmetic as a prerequisite.

3. By measuring comparative progress and giving book-keeping tests prepared by the authors.

4. By carefully going over exercises and sets, requiring accuracy for grade and credit.

5. By giving pupil, if possible, actual practice in sets of books, such as student activity accounts.

One will notice from a study of the statistics and diagrams of Table II and Chart I that in the ranking of the commercial training the result is quite significant in that the educators feel that the most important aim of commercial education is just practical business training, and also that the vocational training received is not much greater than general educational training from commercial work.

One will notice from a study of the statistics and diagrams of Table III and Chart II that in ranking personality traits that are taught in commercial training, principals place accuracy as quite outstandingly the most import-

Table II

Showing the rank of the objectives of commercial training.

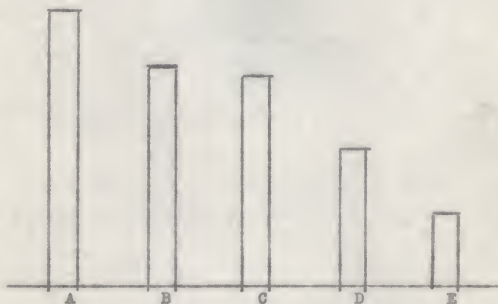
	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice	Fifth Choice	Total	Weighted Total
Practical business training	33	11	10	2	0	56	243
General educational training	10	18	16	9	1	56	195
Vocational training	12	22	14	8	0	56	208
Social training	3	5	12	18	13	51	120
College preparatory training	0	1	4	12	34	51	74

Note: To determine the preference of the various objectives, an arbitrary weighting is used as follows: First choice, 5 points; second choice, 4 points; third choice, 3 points; etc. By multiplying the first choice by 5, the second choice by 4, and the third choice by 3, etc., a weighting was obtained for the five objectives of commercial training as shown in the last column of the table.



Chart I

Showing principal's ranking on the objectives  
of commercial training.



- A - Practical Business Training (weighted score 243)  
B - Vocational Training (weighted score 206)  
C - General Educational Training (weighted score 195)  
D - Social Training (weighted score 120)  
E - College Preparatory Training (weighted score 74)



Table III

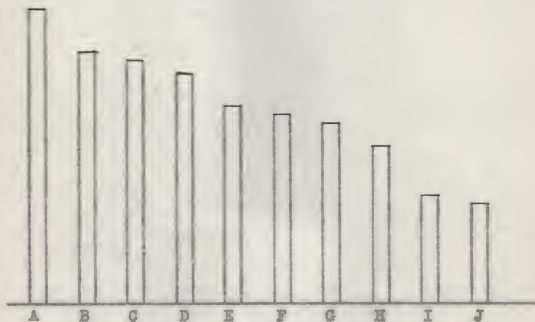
Showing the rank of the personality traits that are taught in commercial training.

	Choice										Total	Weighted Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th		
Accuracy	23	12	6	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	55	463
Reliability	7	12	11	8	3	3	2	3	1	1	51	375
Honesty	18	9	1	5	4	7	1	1	1	1	48	373
Neatness	5	19	7	5	2	4	1	5	1	2	53	372
Self-Control	6	1	8	8	9	8	4	0	3	1	49	300
Initiative	3	3	9	6	7	7	2	3	3	0	48	291
Courtesy	3	4	6	6	6	6	4	5	1	2	46	283
Cooperation	2	3	8	5	7	4	7	7	4	3	47	244
Leadership	0	2	3	0	2	1	6	3	12	0	45	150
Sportsmanship	1	3	2	0	1	3	6	6	12	16	46	140

Note: To determine the preference of the various personality traits that are taught in commercial subjects, an arbitrary weighting is used as follows: First choice, 10 points; second choice, 9 points; third choice, 8 points; etc., a weighting was obtained as shown in the last column of the table.

Chart II

Showing principal's ranking of the personality traits taught in commercial training.



- A - Accuracy (weighted score 463)
- B - Reliability (weighted score 375)
- C - Honesty (weighted score 373)
- D - Neatness (weighted score 372)
- E - Self-Control (weighted score 300)
- F - Initiative (weighted score 291)
- G - Courtesy (weighted score 283)
- H - Cooperation (weighted score 244)
- I - Leadership (weighted score 150)
- J - Sportsmanship (weighted score 140)

ant trait taught. The next three, reliability, honesty, and neatness have been given about the same importance. The other traits are in the following order of importance: Self-control, initiative, courtesy, cooperation, leadership, and sportsmanship. It would indicate that leadership and sportsmanship are not taught to any great extent in commercial work.

The fact that commercial training is not over-emphasized was indicated by 47 administrators, of whom only five felt it was over-emphasized in their community.

Although there is some doubt on the part of principals that commercial subjects are of any value to the boy or girl on the farm, for the most part they feel the training is just as valuable for them as for the city boy or girl and, besides, many rural pupils go to the cities and are employed in business positions. While shorthand is probably of little value and should not be given to those who plan to make no use of it after school, typewriting and bookkeeping are of tremendous value to everyone. So far as the general educational qualities are concerned, farmers need some business training. One reason why so many farmers are failing today is because they do not keep a record of their business. Since most, or at least a large per cent, of the

group does return to the farm, it gives them a basis for using a more complete and accurate record in keeping their farm accounts. Recent farm legislation shows an actual need of accurate farm reports. It helps the farmer in his business dealings and furnishes him with a practical and efficient method of handling and recording ordinary farm transactions, and also it aids in determining profits and losses in respect to his capital invested. It creates a desire to develop a more intelligent attitude toward the business aspect of farming; and if the student does not go on to college, he is more able to be a business manager on the farm. It was well expressed by one principal who mentioned that a year of bookkeeping and a year of typewriting would fit in nicely with the vocational agriculture program as it is carried out in some communities.

While the administrators were somewhat divided upon the question of whether pupils were being rushed into industry without sufficient cultural training in academic subjects, it was believed that by following the state requirements for three years of English and a minor in social science and work in five groups there was very little danger of doing this. Personal cultivation comes in doing one's work well. There are too many who have no background; they need

specific training as well as cultural training. The increasing complexity of social and economic groups demand that the boy and girl have specific training as well as a broad, general training to succeed. The matter of whether academic subjects are being neglected will depend largely upon the organization of the school curriculum.

According to the principals' observation of students who have gone into commercial positions, the causes for success or failure are shown in the following outline:

Success	Failure
1. Good personality traits and desire to succeed.	1. Poor personal qualities or original deficiency.
2. Industrious, honest, and reliable.	2. Lacks initiative, sense of honesty, and reliability.
3. Careful and thrifty.	3. Carelessness and shiftlessness and failed to develop efficiency in school.
4. Realized importance of opportunity while in school, mastered the subject matter and really had an objective.	4. Took work merely for credit and had no real objective in view.
5. General training made it possible to adapt himself to new situations.	5. Failure to differentiate between things important and things unimportant.
6. Proper social background, good home training and proper control.	6. Improper background and improper control.

(Continued.)

Success	Failure
7. Those successful were those with initiative and knew how to go on with their work.	7. Lack of initiative and failure to go ahead with work unassisted.
8. Made further study in putting principles into practice and kept abreast with the times.	8. Failure to keep pace with the times, they do not study inside workings of their company.
9. Adequate preparation resulting in thorough business principles.	9. Poorly prepared, therefore lacking knowledge of business principles.
10. Satisfied on the job and ever alert to needs of his employer.	10. Impatient and seeking advancement too rapidly.
11. Well equipped in English fundamentals and good in composition.	11. Poor in English and spells and punctuates incorrectly.
12. Qualities that would have led to success in other lines of endeavor, probably.	12. Same element that would have been involved had they attempted any other line of work.

## Part II

It is the general consensus of opinion of employers that employees were giving satisfaction in the various positions held. To this question there were 39 employers answered in the affirmative and only two in the negative.

Eleven questionnaires carried no reply to the question. In response to the inquiry as to how long employees have been in their present positions, the length of time will also verify the fact that they are making good on the job. They have been in their present positions for an average of five years. The largest number of drop-outs appear in the sixth and seventh years which is probably due to girls getting married and boys going into business for themselves. The following Table IV will show the number of employees who have successfully completed a certain number of years of employment.

Table IV  
Number of Years in Employ

6mo	1yr	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr	6yr	7yr	8yr	10yr	11yr	12yr	14yr	15yr
<u>6</u>	4	10	5	5	6	2	2	4	5	1	1	1	1

English and spelling were listed by the employers as the weakest traits in the pupils they have employed. The employers also indicated that some stress could be placed upon general business principles to some advantage. The commercial department does not include English and spelling although these subjects are quite generally thought of as



essential to all phases of education. General business training would come under the commercial department and perhaps should be stressed more.

A study of the statistics of Table V and Chart III indicate an interesting distribution of the average employees time while on duty. It will readily be seen that shorthand and typewriting take up about 27 per cent of the average time of all the pupils studied. Bookkeeping is next high with 21 per cent, selling and clerking with 15 per cent come next, shorthand dictation with  $11\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, and office practice with 8 per cent. This leaves  $18\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the employees' time for other duties than those mentioned above. It is interesting to note that the average employee spends 33 per cent of his time in shorthand and typewriting, compared to 21 per cent for bookkeeping, which fact would indicate that we are not spending too much time in training pupils in these subjects in high school. Only 8 per cent of the average pupil's time is spent in office filing; and although there is every indication that the training is of the utmost importance, the training can well be given in bookkeeping. In accordance with these results it should occupy about one-fourth of the time spent in filing practice which, perhaps, may seem a little high. It is also



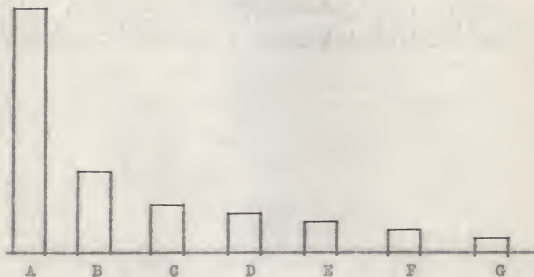
Table V

Showing per cent of employee's time spent in certain duties.

Employee	Shorthand Dictation	Transcribing and Typing	Book-keeping	Selling or Clerking	Office Filing	All other duties	Total time
1	5	10	60	5	10	10	100
2		25	50	15		10	100
3	10	40	40			10	100
4	15	40	5		20	20	100
5		5	65	10	10	10	100
6		10	50	20	10	10	100
7	2	25	10		5	58	100
8			80		5	15	100
9	50	50					100
10	5	70	10		10	5	100
11	5	10	40		5	40	100
12	8	7	3	3	3	76	100
13			5	90		5	100
14	15	65	5		10	5	100
15	5	60	5		5	25	100
16	10	15	20	5	10	50	100
17		50		20		30	100
18	20	65			5	10	100
19		40	20	10	5	25	100
20	25	50	10		10	5	100
21		75			15	10	100
22	30	40			10	20	100
23	10	10		30		50	100
24		5		80	10	5	100
25	5	10	65	10	5	5	100
26	5	94			1		100
27	10	20	20		10	40	100
28	10	10	55		10	15	100
29	10	10			30	50	100
30	33	50			17		100
31	30	10			30	30	100
32	2	5	30	15	3	45	100
33	10		20	70			100
34				90		10	100
35	33	34			33		100
36	5	10		75	5	5	100
37	5	5	80		5	5	100
38	15		50		25	10	100
39	50	40	5	5			100
40			75	25			100
41	25	50	5		5	15	100
42	15		15		15	55	100
	478	1125	896	578	349	777	4200

Chart III

Showing employer's estimate of the average time that is spent while on the job in various activities.



A - Total average time 100%

B - Transcribing and typing 27%

C - Bookkeeping 21%

D - All other duties 18 1/2%

E - Selling or clerking 14%

F - Shorthand dictation 11 1/2%

G - Office filing 8%

significant to note that in almost every case the employee has some office filing work to do.

In the case where selling and clerking seem to be the big end of employee's duties, he apparently spends most of his time in these activities alone; and as 14 per cent of the average time is spent in selling and clerking, a course of salesmanship could well be justified in a high school curriculum where the demand is sufficient for the class.

One will notice from a study of Table VI and Chart IV in ranking personality traits that should be possessed by the employees, employers have designated honesty as outstandingly the most desired trait, accuracy and reliability are the next most desired qualities in the employed. It would also appear that courtesy, cooperation, initiative, and neatness are very essential qualities for employees to have. While self-control, leadership, and sportsmanship are not essential traits to the success of the employee, they are of course desirable.

In response to an inquiry to employers in which it was found that employees are weakest in duties in letter writing, shorthand, and bookkeeping, it was apparent that in letter writing poor spelling was the greatest handicap to the employee, and that typewriting errors and arrangement

Table VI

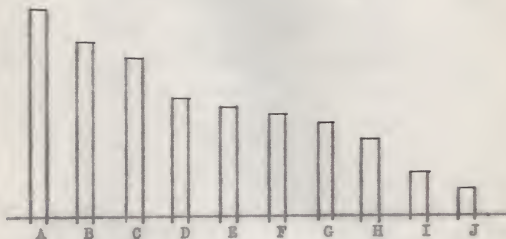
Showing rank of personality traits that are desired by the employers.

	Choice										Total	Weighted Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th		
Honesty	33	2	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	42	396
Accuracy	3	17	8	5	4	3	0	0	1	0	41	323
Reliability	8	12	11	5	1	1	1	2	0	1	39	303
Courtesy	0	2	5	9	9	6	3	1	2	0	37	224
Cooperation	2	3	2	5	9	6	7	3	1	0	36	221
Initiative	1	4	8	8	2	4	2	6	2	2	37	216
Neatness	0	3	4	5	9	5	3	1	2	1	37	204
Self-Control	1	0	1	2	2	9	3	12	4	0	35	149
Leadership	0	2	1	0	0	1	4	5	14	7	34	97
Sportsmanship	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	5	19	32	63

Note: To determine the employers' preference of the various personality traits the employees should possess an arbitrary weighting is used as follows: First choice, 10 points; second choice, 9 points; third choice, 8 points; etc., a weighting was obtained as shown in the last column of the table.

Chart IV

Showing employers' ranking of the personality traits that employees should possess.



- A - Honesty (weighted score 396)
- B - Accuracy (weighted score 323)
- C - Reliability (weighted score 303)
- D - Courtesy (weighted score 224)
- E - Cooperation (weighted score 221)
- F - Initiative (weighted score 216)
- G - Neatness (weighted score 204)
- H - Self-Control (weighted score 148)
- I - Leadership (weighted score 97)
- J - Sportsmanship (weighted score 63)

were somewhat of a handicap although it would indicate that speed is not a serious weakness in letter writing, shorthand, or bookkeeping. The average employee, although able to transcribe his notes fairly well, is not always accurate in transcribing. In bookkeeping the employee is weakest in penmanship although accuracy and neatness are not far behind. From an observation of Table VII these findings are apparent, the highest totals being the weakest traits.

In answer to the question as to whether commercial training received by graduates is meeting the needs and requirements of business firms and corporations, the question was answered in the affirmative by 27, in the negative by 3, and qualified answers were given by 23, which implied that they were quite satisfactory when considering age and lack of practical experience. Several indicated that they possessed excellent foundations for advanced training indicating in some instances that while the employee was giving satisfaction, more training was really necessary for the particular position. One employer suggested that they fit very nicely into positions if employed by a smaller firm in the community in which the school is located, but as a rule high school graduates could not go into the employ of large corporations and do the work ex-

Table VII

Showing the duties in which employees are the weakest.

LETTER WRITING	Selection				Weighted Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Spelling	18	7	4	1	102
Typewriting errors	10	12	2	4	84
Arrangement	10	6	9	2	78
Speed	3	5	4	11	46
SHORTHAND	Selection				Weighted Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Accuracy in transcrib.	15	9	1	2	91
Taking dictation	12	3	9	3	78
Transcribing notes	6	10	55	0	64
Speed	3	2	2	10	32
BOOKKEEPING	Selection				Weighted
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Penmanship	12	6	3	3	75
Neatness	8	11	3	1	72
Accuracy	12	2	7	3	71
Speed	2	4	2	8	32

Note: To determine the employee's weakest abilities, an arbitrary weighting is used as follows: Weakest, 4 points; next weaker, 3 points; etc. A weighting was obtained as shown in the last column of the table.



pected of them without more technical training and experience. In some instances graduates lack ability and initiative to apply what they learn in training to requirements of business firms. More criticism of pupils who have been employed was indicated on the grounds of lack of initiative than any other fault.

Employers differed as to which is the more essential to be taught, the technical or the fundamental principles of business. Twenty-four expressed themselves to the effect that the fundamental principles were more important. Sixteen indicated technical training of more value, and thirteen implied that both were of equal importance. While the real need seems to be technical training, if it is required at the expense of thorough training on the business side, it tends to defeat the purpose of the business course. One indication was that the larger schools possibly should teach more technical courses while the smaller schools should concentrate pretty largely upon the fundamental and general courses. There is very little question but that good foundation is needed by all employees and whether technical training is essential depends upon the type of position and whether the training could be secured in a specialized school.



## CONCLUSIONS

While commercial education is still in somewhat of an experimental stage so far as the curriculum is concerned, there is no doubt but that it is fulfilling the demand of the public for this training. There is every reason to believe, however, that the curriculum needs revising and enriching to meet the needs of the local community and more nearly fit the aims and objectives of public school education. A result of this study has revealed very plainly the fact that educators are acknowledging the usefulness of commercial education and are breaking away from the old traditional idea that nothing but academic subjects are worth while.

The popularity of commercial education is a result of a long felt need that students should be trained in school for business since so large a per cent of the graduates go into employment without further training. Parents can see the value of this training, and the pupil is attracted to it because it gives him a few working tools with which to compete in the workaday world.

The curriculum of the commercial department should directly and ultimately depend upon the community itself,

training the pupil for a life of employment in his own community. The aims and objectives of the modern commercial department should be to build a good foundation for a pupil interested in business. This statement is well revealed in the fact that practical business training is more important than vocational training. Whether we are to develop technically trained pupils or pupils well versed in fundamental principles depends largely upon the needs and requirements of the local community. Generally speaking, it is not the function of the high school to produce experts.

There is every reason to believe that shorthand is not being over-emphasized except, of course, there are students taking the subject who never expect to make use of it. Pupils should be guided in their enrollments so that the subjects studied will more nearly coincide with their future interests. Recent legislation has made bookkeeping of the utmost importance to the rural pupil, and general business training is advantageous to him in post school activities. Typewriting is of value to anyone who is able to master the art.

Speed is not the most important aim in commercial training, and the lack of it is not an apparent weakness among employees. Too much stress is placed on speed in

commercial subjects and unless accuracy and other desired qualities result from contests and interschool contests they can not be justified.

The personal qualities actually taught in commercial education correlates closely with the qualities that should be possessed by the employee in actual employment. Honesty, accuracy, and reliability are the three most important qualities. Cooperation and courtesy need to be stressed more in our business training. More pupils fail in business positions from lack of good personality traits than from any other cause. This means that improving and repairing personality traits is of the utmost importance in all phases of public school work.

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## APPENDIX

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I'm completing my graduate work this summer at the Kansas State College, and I need your opinion on these questions to complete the data for my thesis.

My thesis is a study of high school graduates who have majored in the field of commerce while in high school.

Will you take a minute, answer these questions, as many of them as are conveniently possible for you to answer, "stick" them in the inclosed envelope, and place in your outgoing mail?

I'll appreciate your response; and if you'd like a report of this investigation, I'll mail you a summary later in the summer.

Thank you.

Cordially yours,

### A Questionnaire on Commercial Education

1. Name two business concerns in your community who have employed commercial graduates, either boys or girls, from your high school in the last three or four years.
2. What subjects and number of units of each do you consider necessary to be taught in commercial departments in modern high schools?
3. Have commercial educators provided for the actual conditions of employment into which their commercial graduates go?
4. On what topics in any of these subjects is there too much emphasis placed in present day objectives?
5. What topics in these subjects do you feel are not emphasized enough?
6. What methods have you found successful in accomplishing accuracy in typing?
7. What methods have you found successful in accomplishing accuracy in bookkeeping?

8. Is 60 minutes a day too long for a typing class? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Could the same amount be accomplished in a 40 minute period? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is the practice set in bookkeeping in your school used the first semester or the second semester? \_\_\_\_\_  
 When is the proper time for using them? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How do you rank the objectives of commercial training? Indicate by numbering 1, 2, 3, etc.

Practical Business Training  
 College Preparatory Training  
 General Educational Training  
 Social Training  
 Vocational Training

11. How do you rank the personality traits that are taught in commercial training? Indicate by numbering 1, 2, 3, etc.

Honesty	Reliability
Courtesy	Sportsmanship
Self-Control	Leadership
Cooperation	Neatness
Initiative	Accuracy

12. How do you account for the fact that commercial education is so very popular in our schools today?
13. Is the commercial training over-emphasized in your community? What value does the rural boy or girl get from taking commercial subjects?



14. Are pupils being rushed into industry with relatively little personal cultivation; that is, are academic subjects being neglected?
  
15. In a follow-up study of commercial graduates what has been your observation concerning the causes of their failure or success?

(This questionnaire requires no signature. If you do not find room for your answers, use the other side of the sheet.)

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The principal of your high school has give me  
your name as a business house in your com-  
munity which has employed high school  
commercial graduates.

I'm completing a follow-up study of commercial  
graduates for my master's degree at the  
Kansas State College, and I would appreci-  
ate it if you would answer the questions  
on the enclosed questionnaire, "stick"  
them in the envelope, and place in your  
outgoing mail.

If you would like a report of this investiga-  
tion, I'll mail you a summary later in the  
summer.

Thank you very much.

Cordially yours,

## Questionnaire

1. Have the commercial high school graduates in your employ given satisfaction? \_\_\_\_\_.

2. How long have they been in your employ? \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Of what per cent of their time while on the job does their work consist?

Shorthand dictation	_____%
Transcribing and typing	_____%
Bookkeeping	_____%
Selling or clerking	_____%
Office filing	_____%
All other duties	_____%
Total	100%

4. In which of the following abilities are graduates in your employ the weakest?

Spelling  
English  
Salesmanship  
Filing  
Business principles

5. Rank in the order of their importance (1, 2, 3, etc.) the qualities they should possess.

Honesty	Reliability
Politeness	Sportsmanship
Self-Control	Leadership
Cooperation	Neatness
Initiative	Accuracy

6. If employee has any of the following duties to perform, in which are they the weakest?

Letter writing:	Shorthand:	Bookkeeping:
arrangement	taking dictation	accuracy
spelling	transcribing notes	neatness
typing errors	accuracy in transcribing	penmanship
speed	speed	speed

7. Is the commercial training received by graduates meeting the needs and requirements of business firms and corporations that employ them? \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Do we need technical training for actual business positions as much as we need to teach the fundamental principles of business? \_\_\_\_\_.

(This questionnaire takes but a few minutes to fill out and it requires no signature. Thank you very much for returning it.)

